Public Health Preparedness Messages for the General Public

"Pandemic Influenza"

If Influenza virus spreads across the world, *there will not be vaccine or antiviral medication for everyone for the first several months*. We will need to be prepared and follow some simple guidelines to help protect ourselves and our families or at least delay becoming ill with the virus.

1. Personal responsibility for selves and others will be the key to prevent illness .
    - **Be Prepared** *with food, water, health care supplies*, over the counter medicines, face masks, and supplies at home to meet living needs for up to two weeks.
    - **Be Prepared** *to stay at home when ill*, and keep children home from school when ill.
    - **Be Prepared** *to stay at home when directed* to do so by health authorities. This may be the ONLY way to protect yourself and your family from becoming ill.
    - **Be Prepared** *to take responsibility for your own health* and illness prevention by avoiding crowds, working from home or changing lifestyles as needed to protect selves and others. *Viruses need warm bodies to spread from person to person.*
2. Do not travel to countries where disease is present. Delay trips until disease is resolved.
3. Follow directions given by health officials during disease outbreaks.
4. If ill, **DO NOT GO DIRECTLY TO MEDICAL CLINICS**, but rather call the designated phone numbers first. Medical personnel will advise you what to do.
5. Plan ahead for "Snow Days", where everyone would stay at home, with no events or gatherings occurring anywhere in the community & only essential services operating. This may last 10 - 14 days or longer.
6. In a pandemic event, our local county response will be the only help we can count on. State and national efforts will be spread over the state and country and not available for our direct help.
7. Recognize the "realities" of an Influenza pandemic.
    - 25% of the population will be ill at any time
    - Life as we know it, with school, work, community events and activities, church services, and other social events will be canceled.
    - People will be confined to their own homes, and will need to have supplies and resources enough to sustain them and their families for long periods of time.
    - Care of ill persons will take place at home, and not necessarily in hospitals. There may not be room for all the critically ill persons in hospitals , or available workers or supply resources may not be available to care for all seriously ill persons.
8. Have access to a credit card with available credit for purchasing medications, groceries and/or other supplies that may need to be delivered to your home if you are ill or not able to leave your home. Stores may not deliver if you do not have any method of payment.
9. Get a Pneumococcal vaccination if you are over 65 years of age or have chronic illness. This may help prevent pneumonia as a complication of influenza.

FAMILY EMERGENCY KIT

Your family emergency kit needs to include enough supplies for your household to stay at home, for up to two weeks. Here are some basic items to include in your emergency supplies:

In case of illness requiring Isolation & Quarantine:

- Non perishable foods for two weeks for your household - **foods that require no refrigeration and minimum preparation are best, such as canned meats, fruits, vegetables, and soups, peanut butter, nuts, crackers.**
- Water - 1 gallon/person/day for drinking and sanitation
- Special needs items for infants, elderly, & disabled - disposable diapers, formula, foods, other supplies
- Prescription medications
- Over-the-counter medications like antacids, fever and pain reducers, allergy meds, cough, cold, & anti-diarrhea meds
- Paper towels, tissues
- Personal care items
- Special dietary needs for all household members
- Books, games, & cards for entertainment
- Fever thermometers
- Hand sanitizers, soaps, detergents, bleach (1:10 dilution for disinfecting surfaces)
- Face masks/dust masks
- Family communication plan
- Cash and/or credit cards
- Blankets
- Garbage and plastic bags and ties
- Zip-lock bags
- Personal Identification and contact information
- Important family information including medical information for every person

Additional items needed for other types of emergencies

- Extra set of house and car keys
- Candles and matches/lighter
- Changes of clothing for all
- Flashlights and batteries
- Battery-powered radio and batteries
- Disposable eating utensils and manual can opener
- First aid kit
- Rain gear (poncho)
- Water purification tablets
- Whistle
- Tools, can opener, work gloves

- Copies of passports and photos of each family member
- Sturdy, easy to carry, non-paper containers to store emergency supplies
- Map of the area
- Basic kitchen accessories for cooking, eating & food storage
- Paper, pencils/pens
- Fire extinguishers
- Copies of medical records & medical prescriptions
- Copies of all credit cards
- Extra pair of glasses or contacts

BIOTERRORISM, & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEBSITES:

- CDC Pandemic Influenza website: http://www.pandemicflu.gov
- Division of Emergency Management: dem@state.mn.us
- US Department of Homeland Security: http://www.ready.gov
- "Terrorism: Fear, Fiction, Facts" - the CDC Public Response Service, operated by the American Social Health Association: cdcresponse@ashastd.org
- American Red Cross: http://www.redcross.org

OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER FOR HELP:

Citizens and health care workers can sign up to help in our Nobles or Rock County community, if a public health event would require mass dispensing clinics, phone calling and monitoring, delivery of food of medicines, or many other jobs that could be performed by citizens and/or health care workers. By registering, your name will be added to the list of volunteers. Your information is only made available to local coordinators who will follow-up with those registered in the area. The information will not be available to the public for any purpose. Local County Public Health will have access to the names of registered volunteers and can call on persons on the list when in need of workers. You always have the right to refuse and are not bound to volunteer.

MINNESOTA RESPONDS MEDICAL RESERVE CORP:

- Health Care Workers (nurses, doctors, pharmacists, pharmacist techs, dentists, etc.) register on-line at http://www.health.state.mn.us/oep/volunteer/index.com